

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

November 23, 2005

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

Notes: Robin Harkless

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the "record" of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Vernita Bar

Russ Langshaw, Grant County PUD, provided information on observed chum redds in Hanford Reach. As of November 20, 74 redds were observed at 60-65 kcfs; 38 were observed at 65-70 kcfs; and 60 were observed above 70 kcfs. The 2005-06 critical flow elevation for the Hanford Reach was set at the 70 kcfs elevation. Reverse load factoring ended at midnight on 20 November. Thus, Vernita Bar was set at 70 kcfs. A question was asked about whether the experimental operation implemented this year would be pursued again in future years. Russ responded that the data still needs to be evaluated, and that likely the PUD would not pursue the same operation again next year. Russ will continue to provide updates to TMT on Hanford Reach operations.

Chum Discussion

On November 18, surveyors observed: 264 Fall chinook, 63 live chum, 6 coho, 179 chinook redds and 43 chum redds in the Ives Island area. The numbers are comparable to last year. Operations for chum began on 11/10. A test, at 15.5', is scheduled for Sunday, November 27. It was noted that unit outages and dry weather have posed challenges to meeting the chum tests. TMT will continue to track chum operations as the season continues.

Temperature/Hatchery Impacts at Dworshak

Dave Wills, USFWS, reported that a request was put forth for warmer temperatures out of Dworshak to accommodate the hatchery fish, and the COE provided a test operation with the lowest gate opening in overshot mode. This provided 50.5°, which was within the hatchery's requested temperature range. The operation will continue unless temperatures reach 53°, at which time operations would switch to undershot mode. Dave added that the fish are a little smaller than usual but that the hatchery folks were not overly concerned.

2006 Water Management Plan

While waiting for results of the BiOp litigation, the Action Agencies are using the WMP as guidance for operating the FCRPS. BPA has provided updates to the emergency protocols listed in the WMP. NOAA plans to comment on the WMP by next week, before a status update is provided at the next IT meeting, December 1. IDFG might

provide comments if time permits. WDFW will review the new information added to the protocols list.

Snow Pack Review

Information on precipitation and snow pack for November was linked to today's agenda. Precipitation for November is generally above average throughout the region, but not by a large percentage. Snow conditions are about average in the region, except for in southern Idaho, where conditions are below average. NOAA's longer term forecast shows uncertainty about what kind of year it will be. Kyle Dittmer's forecast shows a slightly below precipitation for November, and about average precipitation through December.

Operations Review

Reservoirs – Grand Coulee was at elevation 1283.2', drafting to meet chum flow. Hungry Horse was at 3539.5' and filling slightly. Libby was drafting 20 kcfs out and at elevation 2439.8'. The Libby forecast shows 111% of normal; there will be another check-in on the Libby forecast in early December to help determine an elevation target. Albeni Falls reached its target elevation of 2055' on 11/11 and operators will maintain that elevation. Dworshak was drafting slightly, at minimum flow, and at elevation 1518.6'.

Fish – Nothing to report at this time.

Power system – The system is operating to meet chum flows.

Water quality – Laura Hamilton, COE, reiterated what was discussed earlier about Dworshak temperatures (see above).

TMT Meeting Schedule

TMT will meet on the following dates:

- December 7,
- December 21,
- January 11, and
- January 25 (or 1/18, depending on the SRWG/SCT schedule).

Agendas will be developed and posted prior to the meetings. Someone from BPA's TBL group will provide a 2005 review of operation effects on the power system sometime in January.

Technical Management Team Meeting

November 23, 2005

1. Greetings and Introductions.

Today's meeting was chaired by Cathy Hlebechuk and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at this meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Hlebechuk at 503/808-3936.

2. Vernita Bar Elevations Expected for This Season.

Russell Langshaw said field crews had counted 74 redds in the 60-65 Kcfs flow band; 38 in the 65-70 Kcfs flow band and 60 redds in the band above 70 Kcfs. Therefore, the critical Vernita Bar elevation will be set at 70 Kcfs throughout the winter.

This was an experimental operation this year, with the "double reverse" load following, said Paul Wagner – has Grant County PUD decided whether to implement this operation in the future? Not at all, Langshaw replied – we will be evaluating the data we collected this year, but will likely not duplicate the operation we did this year – there was lots of spawning at the higher elevations.

3. Chum Operations and Issues.

David Wills said that the last spawning survey took place on November 18; the crews are out again today. Last Friday's survey is available via the Fish Passage Center homepage. As of Friday, there were 63 live chum, 43 chum redds, 264 live chinook and 179 redds on the Ives Island spawning grounds. The counts are comparable to the 2004 counts for this date. We'll provide another update next meeting, said Wills.

The actual chum operation started November 11, added Hlebechuk. Testing is ongoing, but has been delayed because of milfoil, said John Wellschlager – the next test is scheduled for Saturday, November 26. They're planning to hit 15.5 feet this weekend. Another problem is that it has been so dry for the past two weeks; it takes a lot more flow to hit the target when things are this dry.

4. Temperature and Hatchery Impacts at Dworshak.

Wills said that, over the past week, the personnel at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery contacted the Corps to request a warmer outflow temperature from Dworshak. The bottom line was that the Corps tested the lowest gate opening in overshot mode, which produced a temperature of 50.5 degrees F. That was acceptable to the hatchery, and it looks like they will be able to run that for awhile, Wills said. All of the steelhead have been ponded, and they want to give them a couple more weeks to acclimate before turning on the re-use system about December 15. The fish are a little bit behind, growth-wise, this year because of the lower water temperatures; hatchery personnel hope to see the steelhead catch up once the re-use system comes on-line. However, the guys at the hatchery do not appear to be that concerned, Wills added – it looks like everything will likely work out.

5. 2006 Water Management Plan.

The most recent draft of the 2006 Water Management Plan is available via the TMT website, said Hlebechuk; there is also a draft of the fall/winter update on the TMT website. It is also attached to today's agenda on the TMT homepage. the updated emergency protocols are also available, but no comments have been received to date.

Everyone knows there is litigation going on, and no one knows how that's going to turn out, but we need to keep moving forward regardless, Wellschlager observed. Paul Wagner said he will provide NMFS's comments next week. Russ Kiefer said IDFG's comments have been in limbo due to the litigation; because I'm overwhelmed, I have moved on to other things, he said. Kiefer said he will discuss the 2006 WMP with his policy folks to see what comments Idaho may want to provide. Cindy LeFleur said that, in all likelihood, Washington will not be providing comments. She added, however, that she will review the plan and provide any comments she feels are necessary.

What do you want us to say to the IT next week? Hlebechuk asked. That NMFS will be submitting comments, and that Idaho and Washington will provide whatever comments they feel are appropriate, Silverberg replied.

6. Snow Pack Review.

With respect to precipitation for November to date, said Hlebechuk, it's a mixed bag, but in general, more above-average than below-average for November for the Columbia Basin. With respect to the snow pack, in general, it is close to normal throughout the basin, except in southern Idaho. One thing that has helped us lately is that, even though it's been dry, it's been cold, Wellschlager added. This time of year, however, all bets are off – if we have a dry December, the water year will be headed into the dumpster.

Kyle Dittmer said his forecast shows slightly colder, slightly-below-normal precipitation and temperatures; for the rest of the winter, he is predicting near-normal precipitation and slightly below-average temperatures. Thanksgiving, however, will be sunny and dry, he added.

7. Operations Review.

Hungry Horse is at elevation 3539.5 and filling slightly; inflows have been pretty strong, said Tony Norris. At Grand Coulee, we're at 1283.2 feet this morning and drafting to meet chum flows. Libby is at 2439.8 feet, releasing 28 Kcfs and drafting, said Hlebechuk. Albeni Falls hit elevation 2055-2055.5 on November 11. Dworshak is at elevation 1518.6 and drafting slightly at minimum outflow.

The STP run that came out yesterday – did that factor in the 70 Kcfs operation at Vernita Bar? Wills asked. the chum operation completely overpowers Vernita Bar, Wellschlager replied – if we're doing the chum operation, we won't have any trouble meeting the Vernita Bar minimum.

With respect to fish, Wagner said all of the action, currently, is in chum and fall chinook; smolt monitoring ceased on October 31. Wellschlager said there is nothing to report from the power system side. Laura Hamilton said Dworshak switched from undershot to overshot mode on November 21, resulting in a release temperature of 50.5 degrees.

8. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, December 7. Meeting summary produced by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor. Future meetings were set for December 21, January 11 and January 25.

Technical Management Team Meeting Participants November 23, 2005

Name	Affiliation
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Polly Krantz	Sempra Energy Trading
Kyle Dittmer	CRITFC
Russell Langshaw	Grant PUD
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Bruce MacKay	Consultant

Dave Benner	FPC
Margaret Filardo	FPC
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Tom Le	PSE
Dave Wills	USFWS
John Wellschlager	BPA
Robin Harkless	Facilitation Team
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Tony Norris	USBR
Nic Lane	BPA
Russ George	WMCI
Dan Spear	BPA
Shane Scott	PPC
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Laura Hamilton	COE